

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BUENOS 00212 111759Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4074
INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

S E C R E T BUENOS AIRES 0212

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PBOR, AR, CI
SUBJECT: CHILEANS REQUEST USG GOOD OFFICES
ON BEAGLE DISPUTE

REF: (A) SANTIAGO 0108 (B) STATE 7082

1. EMBASSY SHARES SANTIAGO'S MISGIVINGS ABOUT INVOLVING OURSELVES IN A COMPLEX DISPUTE BETWEEN TWO AUTHORITATIAN GOVERNMENTS, WITH WHOM OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE COOL BECAUSE OF DIFFERENCES OVER HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS. OUR IMMEDIATE REACTION IS THAT WE ALREADY HAVE SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH ARGENTINA AND THE NEAR-TERM PROSPECT IS FOR FURTHER DETERIORATION IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. TO COMPLICATE THIS WITH AN OFFER OF "GOOD OFFICES" IN AN ISSUE WHICH MAY DEFY SATISFACTORY (TO BOTH SIDES) SOLUTION MAY NOT BE IN OUR INTEREST.

2. IN THE COURSE OF PAST FEW DAYS AMBASSADOR AND EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE EXPRESSED TO ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT AND ARMED FORCES FIGURES OUR GROWING CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF MILITARY CONFRONTATION IN THE BEAGLE CHANNEL AREA. FROM THESE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BUENOS 00212 111759Z

CONVERSATIONS THUS FAR WE DO NOT HAVE THE SLIGHTEST INKLING THAT THE ARGENTINES MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN OUR INVOLVEMENT IN ANY WAY.

3. WHILE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS DO NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS IF THE CHILEANS ARE WILLING TO RETREAT FROM WHAT THE ARGENTINES REGARD AS AN

INTRANSIGENT AND TOTALLY UNREASONABLE POSITION, THEY STRESS THAT THE TALKS ARE AT AN IMPASSE NOW. THE ARGENTINE PRIORITY AT THIS STAGE SEEMS TO BE ON REGISTERING THEIR REJECTION OF THE ARBITRATION DECISION FIRST AND WORRYING ABOUT FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS (OR ARBITRATION) LATER. ACCORDING TO THIS MORNING'S PRESS (JANUARY 11), THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT MAY FORMALLY ANNOUNCE ITS REJECTION OF THE ARBITRATION DECISION ON JANUARY 25.

4. IN REPORTING THE DEPARTMENT'S NOON BRIEFING OF JANUARY 10 THIS MORNING'S PRESS INTERPRETED MR. CARTER'S STATEMENT AS MEANING THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFERED TO MEDIATE IN THE BEAGLE DISPUTE. ONLY LA NACION CARRIED THE DEPARTMENT'S CLARIFICATION.
CASTRO

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NNN

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